

CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report: January 1, 2005 to March 31, 2005

SENEGAL: INCREASING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION USAID Associate Cooperative Agreement No. 685-A-00-03-00094-00 under CEPPS Leader Cooperative Agreement No. DGC-A-00-01-00004-00

Project dates: April 15, 2003 to June 26, 2005

I. SUMMARY

Increased tensions over changes to the electoral process for the 2006 legislative and 2007 presidential elections dominated Senegal's political landscape during this quarter. In January, a legislative committee formulated a draft law defining a new national independent electoral commission (CENA) that was followed in March by President Wade's announced intent to create an entirely new voter registry. Although the administration claims that these changes will result in more inclusive 2006 and 2007 elections, opposition leaders have expressed skepticism of President Wade's commitment to a fair and inclusive electoral process.

To strengthen the inclusion of women in the political process in Senegal, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) is implementing activities designed to increase the capacity of women councilors to represent constituents and play a leadership role in local politics. Program activities this quarter included: a) the inauguration of the National Network of Women Councilors in Dakar; b) the hosting of a meeting of NDI trainers to evaluate and increase the effectiveness of trainings provided to local councilwomen; and c) continued political leadership and local development trainings for women in five additional regions: Diourbel, Thies, Louga, St. Louis and Ziguinchor.

Post-training evaluations completed by women councilors indicated that they felt better prepared to lead their communities. They also expressed enthusiasm about using their new advocacy skills and knowledge of political systems to represent consitiuent concerns. After the trainings, councilwomen also demonstrated greater self-confidence. Women who had not wanted to stand up in front of others were able to speak to an audience comfortably. In addition, while speaking to an audience, councilwomen chose topics and language demonstrating their increased knowledge of the political process.

In the next quarter, NDI will complete capacity building training sessions for women councilors in the remaining three regions of the country (Dakar, Kolda and Tambacounda). Following these trainings, the Institute will organize a three day retreat for the National Network leadership to provide them with a forum to design strategies for consolidating the Network.

II. BACKGROUND

Political debate in Senegal this quarter focused on proposed changes to the electoral process for the upcoming 2006 legislative and 2007 presidential elections. Opposition and ruling party leaders have yet to reach a consensus on two major issues. First, in forming the CENA, these actors need to agree on the competencies, structure and degree of independence of this new election oversight body. A legislative committee formed of representatives of all political parties submitted to President Wade in late January draft legislation defining the powers of the CENA. Although the draft legislation has been approved in Cabinet and forwarded to the National Assembly for a vote, opposition leaders continue to express doubts about Wade's commitment to fair and inclusive elections.

Secondly, President Wade has proposed to replace prior voter registries with an entirely new registry, based on a new electronic system for issuing national identity cards, in time for the May 2006 legislative elections. Under this system, citizens will use their identity cards to register to vote. This proposal has also spawned tension, as party leaders fear that President Wade is creating a registry favoring his party. There is also wide scale skepticism that the government will be able to implement the new electronic identity card and voter registration system in time for the May 2006 legislative election.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

NDI facilitated the official inauguration of the National Network of Women Councilors, an umbrella organization uniting the separate Women Councilor Associations (WCAs) in each of Senegal's 11 regions. The Institute also convened a meeting of its trainers to evaluate the training process. In addition, NDI continued its core leadership and community development training activities, providing trainings to local councilwomen in five additional regions.

Inauguration of the National Network of Women Councilors

On February 26, NDI facilitated the official inauguration of the National Network of Women Councilors at a public ceremony in Dakar. The Network is intended to serve as an umbrella institution through which councilwomen from all 11 regions of the country will work together to exchange information and plan activities that strengthen their contribution to political decision making.

Ruling and opposition party representatives attended the inauguration of the National Network to express their support for increased women's political participation in Senegal. Aminata Tall, Minister of State and Minister of Local Collectives, spoke at the event. Other speakers included U.S. Ambassador Richard Roth, National Network President Emilie Diatta, Joint Secretary General to the President Mbaye Diack, President of the Benin Network of Elected Women Councillors Isabel Gbedji, NDI Senior Associate Chris Fomunyoh and NDI/Senegal Resident Representative Geraldine Pelzer.

More than 1,200 women councillors attended the event, even though NDI had only provided a transport allowance to 200 councilors. Representatives of this large group met with

the Network leadership during the event to strategize on key issues, such as each group's regional action plan.

Trainer Consultations

Following the first round of trainings in leadership and local development conducted in December 2004, the field staff organized on January 12, 2005, a meeting with all local NDI trainers. The objective of the meeting was to identify best practices and to discuss strategies to overcome challenges and improve training results. Participants agreed, for example, that to better disseminate information to councilwomen about the dates and locations of training sessions, they had to communicate directly with councilwomen rather than relying on local authorities, such as mayors, to relate the information to councilwomen. This decision was based on information given to trainers by councilwomen emphasizing that local authorities and councilwomen do not communicate effectively about training logistics. The trainers therefore agreed to make direct phone calls to key councilwomen as well as disseminating information through local officials.

At the meeting the trainers also explored strategies for better involving the regional WCAs in the process of organizing the trainings and other women's leadership activities. The participants agreed that such involvement would lead to more effective and well attended training sessions. In addition, they agreed that such participation would reinforce the long-term sustainability of the WCAs. The trainers therefore decided that the WCAs be included in delivering invitation letters to local authorities to attend training sessions and in making follow-up calls to councilwomen to alert them to training dates and times. In addition, the trainers agreed to ask the WCAs to help organize other aspects of the trainings, such as making transport, accommodation and meal arrangements.

Trainings for Women Councilor Associations

From January 1 to March 31, 2005, NDI conducted trainings in leadership and local development for councilwomen in five regions: Diourbel, Thies, Louga, St. Louis and Ziguinchor. The trainings, which covered political leadership skills, such as public speaking, drafting and presenting budgets, formulating advocacy strategies and planning local development initiatives, took place over a three day period in each region. These trainings reached councilwomen in a total of 15 departments.

During these trainings, the two trainers assigned to each session engaged councilwomen in role play scenarios in which they lobbied on selected issues. The trainers also separated councilwomen into small work groups to create budgets and discuss leadership strategies. Additional training techniques included having councilwomen deliver verbal presentations for their colleagues, present sketches to illustrate community problems, and share their personal experiences about leading their communities.

Compared to the first round of trainings, NDI field staff and trainers noted an increase in the number of overall participants. This increase was attributed largely to improved strategies for disseminating training information developed in the trainer's evaluation meeting in January.

Specific information pertaining to the trainings includes the following:

• Region of Dioubel: NDI provided trainings from January 26 to 28 in the departments of Bambey, Diourbel and Mbacké. In Bambey, 28 out of a total of 35 women councilors attended; in Diourbel 27 out of 35, and in Mbacké, 38 out of 42 women councilors were present. During these trainings, councilwomen benefited from support from the region's local authorities, who visited the training sessions and spoke to the councilwomen. In Bambey, a representative of the mayor spoke at the trainings. In Mbacké and Diourbel, the deputy mayor and deputy prefet visited the training session. In Diourbel, a representative of the local government development project also attended.

These local authorities expressed their support of increased women's political participation in Senegal. In the department of Diourbel for example, the prefet emphasized in his opening remarks the importance of collaboration between women and men in the development of their regions. He stressed that as councilors, the women must understand the role of local collectivities and how to elaborate a budget and provide for the needs of their communities.

- Region of Thies: NDI conducted trainings from January 26 to 28 in the departments of Thies, Tivaouane and Mbour. In the department of Thies, 55 councilwomen out of a total of 64 were present, in Tivaouane 54 councilwomen out of 64 participated and in Mbour, 36 out of 57 councilwomen attended the trainings. Officials present at the training opening ceremonies in the three departments included the prefet of the region, the mayors of the departments and, in some cases, representatives of local development agencies. NDI trainers noted a particularly strong enthusiasm in this region for political participation among the women councilors and solid support of women councilors on the part of local authorities. In the department of Mbour, trainings were conducted in the Wolof language instead of French.
- Region of Louga: NDI held trainings from February 14 to 16 in the northwestern region of Louga, composed of the 3 departments of Kébémer, Louga and Linguère. Out of a total of 43 women councilors in Louga, 31 attended the trainings, 23 out of 34 participated in Kébémer and 26 out of 43 were present in Linguère. The deputy mayor and the deputy prefet attended the training opening ceremony in the department of Linguère and the director of the Regional Development Agency (ARD) was present at the training in the department of Kébémer.

During the training session in Linguère, the women councilors shared some of the challenges they face in the execution of their duties. Following a discussion on local development strategies, several women said that the delay in which they receive invitations from local officials to attend meetings addressing local development issues was major obstacle to their participation in community development projects. Other



women mentioned that they do not even receive such invitations. The councilwomen also reported that they are often excluded from the voting process on the community budget.

 During the training sessions in the departments of Linguère and Louga the WCAs of these departments were officially established. Inaugurating these WCAs in these departments will provide a structure through which women councilors will be better able to share information and organize women's community activities. The prefet attended

the inauguration ceremony of the WCA in the department of Louga and encouraged women councilors to participate in the development of their department. He told them that "as councilors, you are the representatives of this department. Your role therefore similar to that of Members of Parliament at the National Assembly."



• Region of Saint Louis: NDI

provided trainings from March 7 to 10 in the departments of Dagana, Podor and St. Louis. In the department of Dagana, all 28 women councilors attended the training. In the department of Podor, 20 out of a total of 33 councilwomen attended the trainings. In the department of St. Louis, 16 out of 21 women councilors were present.

The trainings in St. Louis coincided with the celebration of International Women's day on March 8. All 28 women councilors from the Department of Dagana and all 21 councilwomen from the department of St. Louis congregated in front of the mayor's office in the city of St. Louis. Holding banners inscribed with "Network of Women Councilors" and "Women's Participation for a Better Senegal," they marched, singing

and dancing to drums, to the governor's office. The governor waited for the procession to arrive, shook hands with many of the councilwomen and delivered a speech expressing his support for women's political participation. The president the St. Louis regional WCA delivered a speech as well, in which she enumerated problems of particular concern to women councilors in the community. These problems included child begging, the trafficking of children and women, child prostitution and the challenge of keep the rate of HIV/AIDS low in the community. It is notable that the president of the regional WCA of St. Louis is one of only two women sitting on the regional council in St. Louis. The remaining forty members of the St. Louis regional council are men.

- Region of Ziguinchor: NDI concluded this quarter's trainings with sessions in the region of Ziguinchor from March 15 to 17 in the departments of Bignona and Ziguinchor. In the department of Bignona, 37 out of a total of 60 councilwomen attended the trainings and in the department of Ziguinchor, 27 out of 43 councilwomen were present. In the department of Ziguinchor, the opening ceremony was presided over by M. Albert Boissy, the representative of the Regional Council and Mr. Dia, representative of the mayor of Zigunichor. In the department of Bignona, Mayor M. Youba Sambou and Mr. Boissy attended the opening ceremony. These officials thanked NDI and expressed support for the trainings, acknowledging that they have strengthened councilwomen's leadership skills and given them and a better understanding of the role of local collectivities. The trainings in the region of Ziguinchor were conducted in French and Wolof.
- Trainers acknowledged that councilwomen in the department of Ziguinchor demonstrated a particularly high level of enthusiasm for and sophistication about local political leadership. Generally, before beginning a training session, NDI trainers have an open discussion with the councilwomen to gauge their knowledge of local political leadership. In Zigunichor, the trainers were impressed that the women were able to easily define the concept of decentralization and recount its history in Senegal before the training began. They were also able to describe the roles and responsibilities of the local collectivities. This pre-training discussion allowed the trainers to begin their sessions in Ziguinchor at a more sophisticated level to better respond to the training needs of councilwomen in the region. It is also notable that in the department of Ziguinchor the councilwomen had themselves organized the invitation process to the trainings.

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Objective: To improve the ability of women councilors to represent constituents and play a leadership role in decision-making at the local level.

Indicators:

In post-training evaluations, councilwomen expressed that they learned skills they did not
believe they were capable of prior to the sessions, such as articulating their opinions in
public and during council deliberations. They also reported feeling an increased sense of
self-confidence as leaders.

- Councilwomen have successfully applied the skills they are learning in the trainings, such as proposal writing, managing budgets and taking initiative. For example, a councilwoman in the department of Louga in the region of Louga, Diary Ba, reported that as a result of NDI training, she was able to write a proposal and receive funding from the Regional Council to build a youth center. The recently built center now serves as a meeting and recreational spot for young people.
- Salane Diouf, a councilwoman who is president of her council's financial committee in the department of Diourbel in the region of Dioubel, told NDI: "I am glad about the training, especially about the budget component because I used to vote without understanding the process and even the importance. Men usually decide. But from now on, I will fight to keep my position and have my view point heard on the voting of the budget."
- Another councilwoman from the department of Diourbel, Mrs. Fama Ndiaye, told NDI that "since my first training with NDI, I regularly check the accounts and I don't wait for an invitation to attend a meeting."
- A councilwoman from the department of Dagana in the region of St. Louis told NDI that although she had been a leader of her community as a supervisor for a local women's consortium before taking NDI's training, she had not run for local government in the past. After taking NDI's training, she decided to run for local council.
- Following the trainings, several councilwomen in the department of Bambey in the region of Diourbel arranged on their own initiative to meet on the 5th of every month to plan community activities. They also agreed to make monthly financial contributions to their WCA activities.
- Councilwomen in the departments of Dagana and St. Louis in the region of St. Louis organized an International Women's Day parade in the city of St. Louis on March 8, 2005, during which they marched together to the governor's office with banners promoting women's political participation. Councilwomen in St. Louis' third department, Podor, were not present because they organized their own International Women's Day event in Podor.
- Women councilors have demonstrated an increased understanding of constituent concerns in their communities. In each region, councilwomen have worked together to create action plans summarizing issues of concern to constituents.

Objective 2: To strengthen support and information networks among women councilors across the country.

Indicators:

- Councilwomen inaugurated in February 2005 a National Network of Women Councilors, an umbrella organization which allows women to network across diverse regions of the country to share information and organize women's political participation activities.
- The creation of the National Network has established a strong sense of solidarity among politically active women. Although NDI arranged for the transport of only 200 councilwomen to attend the Dakar inauguration of the National Network, over 1,200 councilwomen from all regions of the country were present at the event.
- Local and national governmental authorities have demonstrated increased support for women's associations to strengthen political participation. For example, government officials attended the inauguration of the National Network and voiced their support of the Network, the WCA's, and the increased participation of women in Senegalese politics in general. An opposition party representative also attended this event to support the National Network.
- In the department of Louga, ARD Director Momar Lo spoke to councilwomen, expressing his willingness to do everything possible to include training for councilwomen in the local development plan. He also provided women councilors with valuable information about how to get community development projects into the local development plan and to receive funding from donors. He suggested, for example, that councilwomen consider looking for funds from S.O.S Project Sahel, an organization that supports women's activities.
- The Prefet of Louga expressed to NDI his willingness to facilitate training sessions, and suggested that the trainings be extended to include men.

V. EVALUATION

The National Network

The establishment of the National Network and the continuation of leadership and community development trainings have equipped local councilwomen with tools to play more active political roles in Senegal.

While the regional WCAs allow women councilors to network with one another within individual regions, the National Network enables elected women from diverse regions of the country to share information and organize events. A large number of councilwomen from the southern Casamance region of Senegal, many of whom traveled for more than 10 hours by bus, attended the ceremony in Dakar to inaugurate the National Network. Moreover, over 1,200 women from all regions of the country were present at this ceremony. The participation of these women demonstrates the will and capacity of Senegalese councilwomen to unite across regions to consolidate women's participation in public life.

Moreover, as a national structure, the National Network is more visible than the regional WCAs and will increase national awareness of women as political leaders. The inauguration

ceremony of the National Network, for example, brought national attention to the ambition of women councilors to participate in political decision making. The presence of Senegalese and U.S. government officials at the ceremony drew national media attention to the event. Such coverage is likely to attract increased numbers of women across the country to participate in political decision making. The National Network also offers such women a structure through which they may learn how to become involved in Senegalese politics.

Trainings

NDI's political leadership and community development trainings this quarter reached a higher percentage (67.2%) of local councilwomen in target regions than in prior quarters. This suggests that the Institute has improved its ability to communicate the importance of, and logistical details about, these trainings to locally elected officials.

There are several ways in which the trainings have increased the leadership capacity of local Senegalese councilwomen. The trainings have given them a more sophisticated knowledge of the political process and the tasks they must complete to represent their constituents. For example, councilwomen learn during trainings how to draft a budget for their communities and design effective arguments to advocate the needs of their community. One councilwoman in the region of St. Louis who was returning to a third training session told NDI, "I have come to this training because I want to better understand the relationship between the local council and the municipality." Her politically sophisticated objective demonstrates how the training is contributing to the increased political knowledge of councilwomen.

In addition, the trainings have fostered among councilwomen an increased the sense of solidarity. In training sessions, women share stories about obstacles they have faced in leading their communities and discuss strategies for overcoming their difficulties. These discussions create a sense of shared purpose and foster mutual support. For example, in one training session in St. Louis, a councilwoman shared how she had gone to a traditional village to discuss some community concerns. The male leadership in the village refused to speak with her because she is a woman. As this councilwoman told her story, other women supported her by offering their own stories and suggestions for overcoming this difficulty.

Finally, the trainings have given councilwomen a greater sense of self-confidence. Councilwomen who came to the trainings afraid to stand up in front of an audience were able to deliver speeches in public and speak openly at council deliberations after the trainings. The trainings give women practice standing and speaking in front of each other in a non-threatening environment, allowing them to gain the confidence they need to publicly present their ideas in their communities.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In the next quarter, NDI will complete the capacity building training sessions for women councilors in the final three regions of the country (Dakar, Kolda and Tambacounda). Following these trainings, the Institute will organize a three-day retreat for the leadership of the National Network during which they will strategize about methods for consolidating the National

Network. NDI is currently working to design follow-on activities to this increasingly successful program, with an emphasis on creating mechanisms to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the National Network.